
Appendix A

Environmental Scan

This appendix provides broad documentation of the built and natural environmental conditions that are found within the project study area (one-half mile on either side of the three roadway segments). The Environmental Scan is organized to correspond with many of the subject areas that are required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process. This appendix is not intended to act as a substitute for or preclude formal environmental documentation, nor is it intended to be a complete analysis of all potential environmental issues and resources in the area that could be affected by future improvements. It is anticipated that any future improvements along the corridor would likely require necessary and comprehensive environmental documentation prior to implementation.

1.1 General Economics

The US 14/61/WIS 35 corridor is located in La Crosse County. The county has the 13th largest population in Wisconsin with an average of 236.6 persons per square mile (much higher than the state average of 98.8).

Abundant timber resources drew settlers to the region in the mid 1850's. Today, the timber resources have been depleted and the region has shifted dramatically from a river based industrial economy to a retail/commercial economy. The three largest industries in La Crosse County are: services, trade, and manufacturing led by food & kindred (manufactured items used in the creation of food products such as animal by-products, gum, ice, etc.), apparel, and rubber and plastic production. Sectors within durable good production with higher than state average employment include non-electrical machinery and lumber. In comparison to counties of a similar size in Wisconsin, transportation, service, and trade sectors employ above the state average as well. Of these, the service industry generates most of the county's personal income.

It is projected that by the year 2020, labor shortages will be acute in La Crosse County and the unemployment rate in La Crosse County could drop to less than one percent. The labor force in the county of 74.9 percent participation exceeds both the state average of 73 percent and the national average of 67 percent. However, these numbers may be short lived as an increasing population over the age of 60 and a net out-migration of college graduates is projected over the next five to ten years.

In the last ten years, La Crosse County has continued a net-gain in commuting workers from surrounding counties. Most commuters travel into La Crosse County by way of Houston County, Minnesota (about 3,800 per day). To a lesser extent, about 2,700 commuters per day travel from Vernon County located to the south.

1.2 Community/Residential

The South La Crosse Transportation Study area includes the City of La Crosse and the Town of Shelby in La Crosse County.

La Crosse County experienced a population increase of 7.5 percent (91,056 to 97,904) between 1980 and 1990. Over the next decade (1990 to 2000), the population increased by 9.4 percent (97,904 to 107,120). The future change in population is projected to be near 5.7 percent between the years 2000 and 2010 (107,120 to 113,211).

The City of La Crosse experienced a 5.8 percent increase in population (48,347 to 51,140) between 1980 and 1990. The population increase fell to 1.3 percent (51,140 to 51,818) between 1990 and 2000. The declining trend is expected to continue for the City of La Crosse as projections indicate a net loss (-0.6 percent) from 51,818 to 51,507 residents between 2000 and 2010.

The Town of Shelby experienced a population decrease of 11 percent between 1980 and 1990 (5,620 to 5,002). From 1990 to 2000 the town's population decreased an additional 6.3 percent (5,002 to 4,687). The year's 2000 to 2010 project additional losses in population (4,687 to 4,655) for the Town of Shelby. Combined historical trends coupled with future projections show an expected population decrease of nearly 20 percent between 1980 and 2010 (see Table A-1, Population Comparison). Population decline in the town could be influenced by annexation of lands into the City of La Crosse and the resulting loss in town land area.

Table A-1, Population Comparison

	1980 Actual	1990 Actual	2000 Actual	2010 Projection
La Crosse County	91,056	97,904	107,120	113,211
City of La Crosse	48,347	51,140	51,818	51,507
Town of Shelby	5,620	5,002	4,687	4,655

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2003

Local residents within and near the three study area roadway segments have several types of housing options nearby. Large pockets of single family residential homes are found along the urban segment between Chase Street and 16th Street with most single family homes located at least one block off of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road.

Numerous apartment complexes also provide homes for residents. St. Valentine, Nicolz Apartments, and Geneva Terrace are complexes located on or near South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road. The Bluffview Townhouses provide multi-family housing options, located just off the corridor on 33rd Street. A rather large mobile home park provides housing west of Mormon Coulee Road via 33rd Street.

Pockets of single family residential housing exist along US 14/61 and side streets between Justin Road and County M. New residential development is sporadic in the vicinity of the corridor, but does continue to occur. A mobile home park is located west of Roesler Park in the Town of Shelby. The Coulee Mobil Park is located just east and north of the Town of Shelby/Town of Greenfield boundary.

Two neighborhoods comprised of single family suburban housing stock are located along WIS 35. The Maple Grove neighborhood is located just south of the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection. The other neighborhood is located just north of the Vernon County Line along County K.

1.2.1 Churches

There are sixty-seven churches located in the City of La Crosse that serve the needs of corridor residents. Three churches: Good Shepard Lutheran, Church of Christ, and Faith Baptist Church are located in the southern part of the urban segment along Mormon Coulee Road near Birch Street. Trinity Lutheran Church and the Shrine of Guadalupe (Dioces of La Crosse) also lie within the study area.

1.2.2 Schools

The City of La Crosse is home to three institutions of higher learning. The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with an enrollment of 8,750 students offers 85 undergraduate and 21 graduate programs. Western Wisconsin Technical College also has an enrollment of approximately 9,400 students and offers 60 associate degrees and technical diploma programs. Viterbo College has a student population of 2,100 offering 38 majors, 27 minors, and three graduate programs.

The School District of La Crosse provides primary education in the vicinity of the study area. The district operates 11 elementary schools, three middle and two charter schools, two high schools, and a charter high school. Public schools located within or near the study area include:

- Southern Bluffs Elementary School – 4010 Sunnyside Drive
- Hintgen Elementary School – 3505 South 28th Street

In addition to public education opportunities, fifteen private schools operate in the City of La Crosse area. Private schools located within or near the study area include:

- Faith Baptist School – 3615 South 28th Street (elementary/secondary)
- Holy Trinity Elementary School – 1417 South 13th Street
- St. Pius Elementary School– 3710 East Avenue South
- Mount Calvary-Grace Lutheran School – 1614 Park Avenue (elementary)
- St. Thomas More School – 2000 Weston Street (elementary)

1.3 Commercial/Business

1.3.1 La Crosse County

La Crosse County provides a mix of rural and urban business opportunities ranging from farming/agribusiness to state-of-the-art medical services. La Crosse County also thrives in the high-tech industry, manufacturing, and retail commercial sectors.

The top ten employers in La Crosse County accounting for 44 percent of all jobs include:

- Gundersen-Lutheran Medical Center – 5,500 employees (largest employer in western Wisconsin accounting for ten percent of greater La Crosse area jobs)
- Franciscan Skemp – 3,200 employees
- Trane Company – 3,150 employees
- University of Wisconsin – La Crosse – 1,300 employees
- La Crosse School District – 1,125 employees
- La Crosse County – 1,082 employees
- Fleming Companies – 1,000 employees
- The Company Store – 800 employees
- Century Tel – 675 employees
- City of La Crosse – 550 employees

1.3.2 City of La Crosse

The City of La Crosse is centrally located in the tri-state area of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa for business and industry. The market area contains 11.5 million people and covers an area within a 200 mile radius. Within the city itself, commercial activities are concentrated in the downtown area, with commercial centers located in southern La Crosse and near the I-94/WIS 16 interchange area and neighboring City of Onalaska. Industrial activities occur within the urban core and throughout the La Crosse area.

The City of La Crosse has won numerous awards including “Money Magazine’s 16th best city to live,” and “16th best for lowest crime rate for metro areas between 50,000 - 200,000.” The downtown area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places with more than 96 of its 110 buildings in the district contributing to the historical character of the city (1866 to 1940 architecture). It is one of the largest historic commercial districts in the state consisting of unique specialty shops, restaurants, museums, and professional offices.

1.3.3 Town of Shelby

The Town of Shelby surrounds the City of La Crosse to the west, south, and east. The predominant land use includes agriculture with the largest commercial areas located adjacent to US 14/61 in the vicinity of Bloomer Mill Road, and along WIS 35 near the La Crosse County/Vernon County Line. These areas also contain the highest residential development densities in the town as well. Sectors providing the largest employment base in the town include education, health, and social services, manufacturing, and retail trade.

1.4 Agriculture

The United States Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. The land must also be available for these uses (cropland, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land).” The project study area does include

areas of prime soil but they are inter-mixed with significant areas of non-prime soils.

Agricultural land comprises 58.5 percent of La Crosse County, whereas, 42.9 percent of land is used for farming statewide. In La Crosse County, there are 759 farms on 169,543 acres of land.

Within the project study area, most of the farming occurs in the towns of Greenfield and Shelby. Both towns fall under county zoning in which large portions are zoned for agricultural activities to be the predominant land use activity.

1.5 Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as areas that range along a gradient from permanently flooded to periodically saturated soil and support hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation at some time during the growing season. Wetlands are important for many reasons. They help minimize flooding by holding moisture and slowly discharging it into the ground, which recharges aquifers. Water filtration is another attribute of wetlands. Vegetation takes up excess nitrogen, phosphorus, copper, and other heavy metals brought in by surface runoff. Wetlands are also important as wildlife nesting and wintering habitat.

The majority of wetlands located within the study area are located adjacent to the Mississippi River, near the Pammel Creek outlet, or along Mormon Coulee Creek. The greatest concentration of wetlands within the study area is located near Goose Island north of the La Crosse County/Vernon County Line. These wetlands are located within the Mississippi River floodplain just west of the existing WIS 35 corridor.

1.6 Streams and Floodplains

The study area is located adjacent to the floodplain and associated wetlands of the Mississippi River to the west. In addition, Pammel Creek and Mormon Coulee Creek are also run through the study area before emptying into the Mississippi River floodplain.

1.6.1 The Mississippi River

The Mississippi River is located to the west of the study area and is the largest river in North America with a drainage area of roughly 1.2 million square miles. Its watershed covers parts of 31 states (41 percent of the continental United States) and two Canadian provinces. The river is a major water transportation route for agricultural products and other goods. Sixty percent of all grain exported from the United States is shipped via the Mississippi River. In the La Crosse area, the Mississippi River's wetlands and forests provide important habitat for fish and other wildlife. Outside of transportation, the Mississippi River is important for tourism and recreational activities, and offers many areas of unique wildlife habitat in the form of refuges, parks, and other protected lands. The riverscape has been modified extensively for commercial navigation leading to higher levels of pesticides and other pollutants.

1.6.2 Pammel Creek

Pammel Creek is located just north of the Mormon Coulee Avenue/33rd Street intersection on the urban segment of the study area. The creek falls

under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The vast majority of the creek within the study area has been altered from its natural state to act as a flood canal before emptying into the Mississippi River. The 1.7 mile canal was completed in 1993 and includes 20 foot tall concrete sidewalls with bottom widths ranging between 36 and 60 feet. Three structures cross the canal within the study area including Mormon Coulee Road, Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad, and a pedestrian bridge.

1.6.3 Mormon Coulee Creek

Mormon Creek is a cold water creek located in the Coon Creek Watershed and runs parallel to US 14/61 and County M within the study area crossing WIS 35 midway between the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection and County K before emptying into the floodplain of the Mississippi River. The 14.6 mile creek supports Brown, Brook, and Rainbow Trout, Burbot, and Rock Bass fish species.

1.7 Lakes

There are no significant lakes within the study area.

1.8 Upland Habitat

La Crosse County is comprised mostly of woodland (44 percent). As part of the “driftless area” (unglaciated) of Wisconsin, the region is comprised of natural bluffs, steeply rolling hills, high ridges, and deep valleys. Small pastures and crop fields can be found in valleys or on ridge tops. There are two state designated prairie natural areas in the county that fall under the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) natural areas program.

A list of state endangered, threatened, and special concern species as documented by the WDNR for La Crosse County follows this section (see Table A-2, State Listed Species of Concern in La Crosse County).

Table A-2, State Listed Species of Concern in La Crosse County

PLANTS		
Common Name	Species Name	Wisconsin Status ¹
Arrow-Headed Rattle-Box	<i>Crotalaria sagittalis</i>	Special Concern
Autumn Coral-Root	<i>Corallorrhiza odontorhiza</i>	Special Concern
Brittle Prickly-Pear	<i>Opuntia fragilis</i>	Threatened
Carey's Sedge	<i>Carex careyana</i>	Threatened
Carolina Anemone	<i>Anemone caroliniana</i>	Endangered
Clustered Poppy-Mallow	<i>Callirhoe triangulata</i>	Special Concern
Clustered Sedge	<i>Carex cumulata</i>	Special Concern
Crossleaf Milkwort	<i>Polygala cruciata</i>	Special Concern
Dragon Wormwood	<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>	Special Concern
Glade Fern	<i>Diplazium pycnocarpon</i>	Special Concern
Glade Mallow	<i>Napaea dioica</i>	Special Concern*
Great Indian-Plantain	<i>Cacalia muhlenbergii</i>	Special Concern
Greenish-White Sedge	<i>Carex longii</i>	Special Concern
Hill's Thistle	<i>Cirsium hillii</i>	Threatened*
Hooker Orchis	<i>Platanthera hookeri</i>	Special Concern

Large Water-Starwort	<i>Callitriche heterophylla</i>	Threatened
Marbleseed	<i>Onosmodium molle</i>	Special Concern
Marsh Horsetail	<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	Special Concern
Marsh Willow-Herb	<i>Epilobium palustre</i>	Special Concern
One-Flowered Broomrape	<i>Orobanche uniflora</i>	Special Concern
Oregon Woodsia (Tetraploid)	<i>Woodsia oregana var cathcartiana</i>	Special Concern
Pale Green Orchid	<i>Platanthera flava var herbiola</i>	Threatened
Prairie Bush-Clover	<i>Lespedeza leptostachya</i>	Endangered**
Prairie False-Dandelion	<i>Nothocalais cuspidata</i>	Special Concern
Prairie Milkweed	<i>Asclepias sullivantii</i>	Threatened
Prairie Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	Special Concern
Prairie White-Fringed Orchid	<i>Platanthera leucophaea</i>	Endangered**
Purple Clematis	<i>Clematis occidentalis</i>	Special Concern
Rock Clubmoss	<i>Lycopodium porophyllum</i>	Special Concern
Rock Stitchwort	<i>Minuartia dawsonensis</i>	Special Concern
Rocky Mountain Sedge	<i>Carex backii</i>	Special Concern
Shadowy Goldenrod	<i>Solidago sciaphila</i>	Special Concern
Showy Lady's-Slipper	<i>Cypripedium reginae</i>	Special Concern
Silky Prairie-Clover	<i>Dalea villosa</i>	Special Concern
Small Yellow Lady's-Slipper	<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	Special Concern
Snowy Campion	<i>Silene nivea</i>	Threatened
Straw Sedge	<i>Carex straminea</i>	Special Concern
Tufted Hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Special Concern
Vasey's Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton vaseyi</i>	Special Concern
Whip Nutrush	<i>Scleria triglomerata</i>	Special Concern
Wild Licorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza lepidota</i>	Special Concern
Yellow Gentian	<i>Gentiana alba</i>	Threatened
Yellow Screwstem	<i>Bartonia virginica</i>	Special Concern

ANIMALS

Common Name	Species Name	Wisconsin Status ¹	Taxa
Giant Carrion Beetle	<i>Nicrophorus americanus</i>	Endangered**	Beetle
American Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	Endangered**	Bird
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Special Concern**	Bird
Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>	Threatened	Bird
Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	Threatened*	Bird

ANIMALS cont.

Common Name	Species Name	Wisconsin Status ¹	Taxa
Dickcissel	<i>Spiza americana</i>	Special Concern	Bird
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Special Concern	Bird
Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	Threatened	Bird
Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Threatened*	Bird
Kentucky Warbler	<i>Oporornis formosus</i>	Threatened	Bird
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Endangered*	Bird
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Threatened	Bird
Prothonotary Warbler	<i>Protonotaria citrea</i>	Special Concern	Bird
Red-Shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	Threatened	Bird
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	Special Concern	Bird

Elusive Clubtail	<i>Stylurus notatus</i>	Special Concern*	Dragonfly
Russet-Tipped Clubtail	<i>Stylurus plagiatu</i> s	Special Concern	Dragonfly
Smoky Shadowfly	<i>Neurocordulia molesta</i>	Special Concern	Dragonfly
American Eel	<i>Anguilla rostrata</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Black Buffalo	<i>Ictiobus niger</i>	Threatened	Fish
Black Redhorse	<i>Moxostoma duquesnei</i>	Endangered	Fish
Blue Sucker	<i>Cycleptus elongatus</i>	Threatened*	Fish
Ghost Shiner	<i>Notropis buehanani</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Gilt Darter	<i>Percina euides</i>	Threatened	Fish
Goldeye	<i>Hiodon alosoides</i>	Endangered	Fish
Mud Darter	<i>Etheostoma asprigene</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Pallid Shiner	<i>Notropis amnis</i>	Endangered	Fish
Pirate Perch	<i>Aphredoderus sayanus</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Pugnose Minnow	<i>Opsopoeodus emiliae</i>	Special Concern	Fish
River Redhorse	<i>Moxostoma carinatum</i>	Threatened	Fish
Silver Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis storeriana</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Speckled Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis aestivalis</i>	Threatened	Fish
Starhead Topminnow	<i>Fundulus dispar</i>	Endangered	Fish
Weed Shiner	<i>Notropis texanus</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Western Sand Darter	<i>Ammocrypta clara</i>	Special Concern	Fish
Blanchard's Cricket Frog	<i>Acris crepitans blanchardi</i>	Endangered	Frog
Western Slender Glass Lizard	<i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i>	Endangered	Lizard
A Heptageniid Mayfly	<i>Pseudiron centralis</i>	Special Concern	Mayfly
An Oligoneurid Mayfly	<i>Homoeoneuria ammophila</i>	Special Concern	Mayfly
Ebony Shell	<i>Fusconaia ebena</i>	Endangered	Mussel
Wing Snaggletooth	<i>Gastrocopta procera</i>	Threatened	Snail
Black Rat Snake	<i>Elaphe obsoleta</i>	Special Concern	Snake
Eastern Massasauga	<i>Sistrurus catenatus catenatus</i>	Endangered*	Snake
Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Special Concern	Snake
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Threatened*	Turtle
Wood Turtle	<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	Threatened	Turtle

¹Wisconsin Status:

Endangered: continued existence in Wisconsin is in jeopardy.

Threatened: appears likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered.

Special Concern: species for which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven.

Rule: protected or regulated by state or federal legislation or policy; neither endangered nor threatened.

* indicates: A candidate for federal listing.

** indicates: Federally Endangered or Threatened.

1.9 Air Quality

The South La Crosse Transportation Study area is located in La Crosse County. Currently, La Crosse County is listed as a “metropolitan county” under chapter NR 400.02 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. This designation governs the regulations under chapter NR 411 Wis. Adm. Code that determine the need to obtain a Construction and Operation Permit for air discharge of carbon monoxide. An air quality evaluation would need to be

conducted for any proposed improvements to determine if they would be exempt from a Construction and Operation Permit.

La Crosse County has been designated an attainment area for O₃ (ozone). Therefore, it is unlikely an O₃ analysis would need to be conducted for any proposed future improvements to the segments within the study area.

1.10 Noise

Future improvements along state highway corridors must follow specific policies to analyze and potentially mitigate for noise. Except for the section between Ward Avenue and East Avenue, the urban segment is primarily commercial in nature with a limited number of sensitive noise receptors affected by traffic generated noise.

Sensitive receptors for traffic generated noise along WIS 35 are concentrated primarily just south of the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection, and in the vicinity of County K. Along US 14/61 sensitive receptors are distributed along the entire corridor, with the greatest concentration in the vicinity of Bloomer Mill Road and County M areas.

WisDOT has adopted policies and procedures developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that specifically address highway noise. There are two types of noise investigation that may take place: traffic noise and construction noise. Where traffic noise is concerned, WisDOT improvement projects require that a general sound quality impact evaluation be conducted. (see Table A-3, FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC)).

Table A-3, FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC)

Hourly A-Weighted Sound Level - Decibels (dBA)		
Activity Category	Leq	Description of Activity Category
A	57 dBA (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B	67 dBA (Exterior)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 dBA (Exterior)	Developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	--	Undeveloped lands.
E	52 dBA (Interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

Source: Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Highway Noise Control Standards and Procedures FHPM 7-7-3.

1.11 Unique Areas

1.11.1 Archeology

Archeological resources are granted protection under a variety of authorities, primarily Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Archeological resources that may be granted protection include burial sites, graveyards, Native American sites and burials, Euro-American artifacts, etc. Coordination with the State of Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding archaeological resources is required for many WisDOT improvement projects.

In order to identify areas of archeological significance, a study was conducted by the Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc. (CCRG) in the summer of 2004. The study found 80 archeological sites (11 including a burial component) located within one mile of the study area. In addition, ten Historic Period Euro-American cemeteries and one cemetery/burial site of unidentified cultural affiliation were also found. The majority of these sites (66 sites) are from the prehistoric period, with 16 of the sites having a historic period component. The Native American sites range in age from the Paleo-Indian to Oneota, with historic period sites primarily identified as Euro-American occupations.

Sites include campsite/villages, mounds/cemetery/burial sites, lithic scatters, shell midden, isolated find spots, and sites of unknown function. The sites are in varying degrees of disturbance with several NRHP eligible sites located under existing buildings or pavement in the urban segment of the corridor (see Appendix B, CCRG Previously Recorded Archeological Sites).

1.11.2 Historic

Historical resources are also granted protection under a variety of authorities, primarily Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section

4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. Historic resources that may be offered protection include those listed as National Register sites.

Coordination with the State of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding historic resources is required for many WisDOT improvement projects.

A search of previously documented architecture/history resources was conducted by CCRG. The Wisconsin Historical Society Architecture/Historic Inventory (WHS/AHI) indicates that there are 1,558 previously recorded properties within the study area. Of the structures, 114 may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NRHP includes 286 listed properties, or included in NRHP districts. Three historic districts lying just north of the study area include:

- 10th and Cass Streets Neighborhood District
- Cass and King Street Residential Historic District
- La Crosse Commercial Historic District

Two additional proposed districts not currently on state or national registers include:

- Mormon Coulee Brick Yard Historic District
- Ellis Historic District

1.11.3 Park/Recreation Areas and Trails

The study area has numerous park and recreational areas available to local residents and travelers to the area. Resources include a national wildlife refuge, a county park with camping, boating and other amenities, and local municipal parks operated by the Town of Shelby and the City of La Crosse.

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is located along the shores of the Mississippi River just west of the study area. The refuge is one of the country's largest and most visited refuges comprising 200,000 acres and extending 260 miles along the river. The refuge was established in 1924 and offers such amenities as scenic overlooks, nature and canoeing trails, boating, swimming, fishing, and hunting.

Goose Island County Park and Campground is a 710 acre county park with over 400 sites available for camping. It is located five miles south of La Crosse on WIS 35 just north of the Vernon County Line. The park is located on an island along the Mississippi River. Amenities located at the park include boat launches, camp grounds, picnic areas and shelters, a canoe trail, swimming beach, and several natural and scenic trails. Fishing and waterfowl hunting is also permitted within the park.

Sherwood Park is a neighborhood park located on 33rd Street just east of Mormon Coulee Road. The park offers a basketball court, benches, and picnic facilities.

Trane Park is a neighborhood park located at the corner of 15th and Chase Streets just east of South Avenue. Amenities include a playground, ball diamond, tennis courts, shelter, and public restrooms.

Mormon Coulee Park is a town park located south of US 14/61 along Mormon Creek in the Town of Shelby. Park amenities include shelters, picnic areas, athletic fields, and trails.

Roesler Park is a small private neighborhood park along County MM just south of US 14/61/WIS 35 with trails and playground equipment.

Mount La Crosse is a privately owned and operated downhill ski facility located southeast of the study area. It has been in operation since 1959. The facility offers a total of 18 ski trails of varying difficulties accessed by three chair lifts. The vertical drop of the facility is 516 feet. The facility is accessed via the Maple Grove neighborhood located just south of the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection.

1.12 Hazardous Materials

Using a 1,000 foot radius of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road as the boundary, a search of state and federal hazardous materials databases was conducted by WisDOT, District 5 staff. A review of state databases resulted in the identification of 31 sites potentially containing hazardous materials within 1,000 feet of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road. The sites fall under two types of hazardous materials concern, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST), and Environmental Repair (ERP) sites. *(Note: The records review/file search included a review of reasonably ascertainable databases of properties within a specified search radius that are on state records. These properties may have had a known or suspected release or spill of chemicals, or have stored, generated and/or improperly handled and disposed of hazardous wastes, hazardous materials, and/or other potential pollutants. This search did not include a comprehensive, exhaustive review of all records or files and is not a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and does not satisfy due diligence requirements for property transfers, or ASTM E 1527-00: Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments.)*

A complete site listing and map of is located in Appendix C, Hazardous Materials Sites.

1.13 Aesthetics

The South La Crosse area is part of the larger aesthetic Coulee Region containing natural bluffs, steeply rolling hills, high ridges, and deep valleys. It is characterized by highly eroded, driftless topography with extensive wooded areas. These occur primarily on the sides and tops of steep ridges. Small pastures and crop fields can be found in the valleys or on the broad ridge tops.

The rolling topography and exposed bluff faces of the “driftless area” (unglaciated) can be viewed from within the study area. The most significant viewsheds occur from the rural segments of the study area. Portions of the floodplain of the Mississippi River are visible from the WIS 35 segment.

The South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road corridor is urban in nature, with a large number of retail/commercial businesses along its course. Views from the roadway in this segment are typical of urban and suburban areas.

1.14 Rustic Road

The Rustic Roads System was established in 1973 to preserve scenic country roads throughout the state for the leisure and enjoyment of cyclists, walkers and motorists. Rustic Roads must be lightly traveled and used for local access only, and have outstanding natural features, topography, vegetation, and scenic or agricultural vistas. Posted speeds on Rustic Roads must be no greater than 45 mph. County MM, which intersects the corridor, is designated as Wisconsin Rustic Road R-26. Rustic Road 26 offers views of the Mississippi River Valley, crosses picturesque Mormon Creek, and passes the historic Oehler Mill site, dating from 1854.